

GROUNDING, UNDERSTANDING, AND EXPLANATION

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ABSTRACT

Starting with the slogan that understanding is a ‘knowledge of causes,’ Stephen Grimm and John Greco have argued that understanding comes from a knowledge of dependence relations. Grounding is the trendiest dependence relation on the market, and if Grimm and Greco are correct, then instances of grounding should also give rise to understanding. In this paper, I will show that this prediction is correct – grounding does indeed generate understanding in just the way that Grimm and Greco anticipate. However, grounding examples of understanding also show that Grimm and Greco are not telling the full story when it comes to understanding. Understanding can only be generated by a particular subset of dependence relations — those dependence relations that are also explanatory. Grimm and Greco should thus appeal to a privileged class of dependence relations, relations like grounding that can give rise to explanation as well.

Keywords: Grounding, Understanding, Explanation, Knowledge of Causes

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